

accusation could have destroyed him, if not for the skill of his attorney.

A Yale- and Harvard-educated prosecutor, Butler had once felt different from the Black men he prosecuted, he told *The Washington Post*. But, he said, “I certainly wasn’t different in the way police responded to me.”

He wanted students to think about the inevitable setbacks and traumatic experiences they would face, and how they would confront those with integrity. “The main thing I wanted students to think about,” Butler said, “is justice.”

For Walters, a 23-year-old Black student from Mobile, Ala., the leadership class initially sounded like a welcome break from typical law classes—in which professors grill students with tough questions—during a busy fall when she is also applying for jobs. But Walters, who is president of the Georgetown Law Black Law Students Association, has been struck by a number of the conversations, including Butler’s.

“It has been inspiring to have this class,” Walters said.

As faculty reflect in the class on their own life choices, the odd zigs and zags of their careers, the abject failures that turned out to be gifts and the pinnacles that unexpectedly fell flat, the stories resonated with other students confronting their own imminent decisions.

People are definitely more stressed about careers this fall, said Luke Bunting, a student from Indiana who has worked for Republican members of Congress and is now in his second year at Georgetown Law. He hopes to work for a firm and make an impact, and hearing from people with such different backgrounds and approaches made him more confident that was possible, he said.

Kristin Ewing, a student from Nebraska by way of a musical-theater career in New York, gained an interest in health-care policy when she saw how performers were affected by their lack of insurance. She said it was reassuring to hear professors talk about career pivots.

Rujuta Nandgaonkar, also interested in health policy—an inclination cemented by the pandemic, she said—was struck by Barnett’s advice to surround yourself with people who disagree with you, and an idea several people shared about getting past the inevitable bumps in the road. “Those are important lessons for these times,” she said.

“This is not the greatest time—but there is hope,” Nandgaonkar said. “That’s the string that runs through it.”

Lesser, a high school teacher for four years before law school, isn’t sure what he wants to do after he graduates. But he is considering options that tie into his interests in democracy and criminal justice reform, such as working in a prosecutor’s office, judiciary committees in Congress or for the military.

After hearing Brooks talk, Lesser said, “her lecture reinforced that having a functional modern democracy is a precious thing, and it can get lost easily if people aren’t willing to perfect it.”

The class has been grounding, Lesser said. “It reminds you of why you’re doing this. That’s important, especially when our country is being tested, our field is being tested. You have to reconnect to the values” that brought people to study the law, he said.

Walters had gravitated during law school to apply to firms because she was worried about paying off student loans. But after a summer of protests following George Floyd’s killing in police custody, she witnessed people paint messages about defunding the police near the White House, and was struck by the role public defenders were playing in the community.

The new economic uncertainty and the idealism reinforced by the class reaffirmed

her original commitment to go back to the South—where she grew up not seeing Black lawyers, she said—and work as a public defender.

“I’m kind of grateful to be able to do what I’m passionate about,” Walters said. “I think it would be great to go back there and try to make it the best place it could be.”

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent but had I been present would have voted yes on rollcall vote 225, motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of James Ray Knepp II, to be a United States District Court Judge for the Northern District of Ohio.

It was necessarily absent but had I been present would have voted yes on rollcall vote 226, on the nomination of James Ray Knepp II, to be a United States District Court Judge for the Northern District of Ohio.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to call upon the administration to take urgent diplomatic action to address the escalating conflict in Ethiopia, a country in the midst of what many in the international community, including myself, had hoped would be a historic political transition to democracy. Instead the country is sliding into civil war. Unless the international community acts quickly to forestall further violence, I fear that bloody and protracted conflict is unavoidable.

Ethiopians have long aspired to participate in a democratic system of government. For years, their leaders let them down, but in 2018, things appeared to change when in response to peaceful popular protests centered in Ethiopia’s Oromo and Amhara regions, Ethiopia’s ruling party elevated Abiy Ahmed to Prime Minister. Prime Minister Abiy undertook dramatic political reform in the first year of his administration, releasing thousands of political prisoners, inviting exiled opposition groups back home, and allowing the press to freely operate. Repressive laws like the Charities and Societies and Anti-Terrorism proclamations, which had long been used to stifle political dissent, were revised and replaced. The new government committed itself to free and fair elections and, for the first time in Ethiopia’s history, introduced a gender-balanced Cabinet. Many Ethiopians and much of the international community rightly celebrated these achievements and looked to further democratic progress. Abiy himself was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019.

Yet transitions from autocratic rule to democracy are rarely seamless, and Ethiopia’s transition is no exception. The journey to democracy has been beset by the proliferation of ethnically motivated violence across the country. In 2018, IOM reported that Ethiopia re-

corded the third highest number of new ID P’s anywhere in the world, fueled by ethnic violence and displacement in Gedeo and West Guji zones, and violence has continued. In June 2019, rogue regional security forces assassinated the president of Amhara region and the head of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, and in June 2020, the murder of popular Oromo singer Hachalu Hundessa triggered violence that killed at least 239 people. Sadly, Ethiopians of all ethnic and religious backgrounds have been victims of this endless cycle of senseless violence.

To be clear, there are some who have taken advantage of new-found freedoms to threaten or use violence to achieve political ends, engage in hate speech, and incite broader conflict. Such behavior is inconsistent with democratic practice and has further exacerbated the country’s ethnic and political divisions in a profoundly damaging way. Ethiopian authorities have a responsibility to protect their citizens by holding the perpetrators and purveyors of such actions accountable through a transparent, credible legal process.

Yet the government’s response to these challenges has only complicated matters. In May 2020, a report from Amnesty International chronicled a long list of abuses committed by Ethiopia’s security forces since the transition began, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and arbitrary arrest. The government has engaged in a troubling crackdown on political opposition, media organizations, and civil society, particularly in the wake of Hachalu Hundessa’s death. There are growing fears that state institutions are being leveraged by the ruling party to unfairly consolidate the current government’s power, including through weaponizing law enforcement and the judicial process to attack government critics. Under these conditions, it is unlikely that Ethiopia’s next general elections can be anything approaching credible, exacerbating an already volatile political situation.

Against the backdrop of a transition in jeopardy, violence between the federal government and political leaders of the Tigray region is escalating. Reports suggest that hundreds have already died in clashes between government and regional forces. I am particularly horrified by evidence of a civilian massacre in Mai-Kadra. I condemn this act and all attacks on civilians in the strongest term, and call for a thorough and transparent investigation by a credible, neutral, independent body. Those who attack civilians must be held accountable in accordance with the rule of law. I am also concerned by reports of civilian deaths as a result of federal government airstrikes, mass displacement, and discrimination and arrests based on ethnic profiling. Authorities in Tigray have confirmed that their forces fired rockets into the capital of a neighboring country, Eritrea.